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Title : Problems being faced by unemployed women workers engaged in small scale industries in Kerala.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): Sir, the traditional industries of Kerala, namely, coir and cashew, are facing a crisis. In these two small scale industries, 90 per cent of the workers are women. Now we are living in an era of women empowerment. But unfortunately, all these women workers are thrown out of employment. When we are discussing the Employment Guarantee Bill, the plight of these workers occur to my mind.

There is a long-standing demand to restructure these two industries to meet the challenging needs of globalisation. So, I would request the Central Government to sanction necessary aid or assistance for restructuring these two traditional industries, particularly the coir industry. An agitation is going on by the coir workers before the Government Secretariat, Trivandrum, Kerala. Their main demand is central assistance for restructuring the coir industry, so also most of the cashew factories are locked up due to non-availability of raw material and even if it is made available, it is of a very high price. The situation has become very intense and most of the factories are at the verge of closure.

So, I would request for the intervention of the Central Government in saving these two traditional industries thereby giving employment to six to seven lakhs of women workers who are employed in these two industries. I expect that a very urgent decision will be taken by the Ministry of Small Scale Industries and necessary steps will be pronounced at the earliest.